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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Three Decades Later -- Arkansas Riverbed Settlement Moving Again  
Legislation Sponsored By Carson Would End Lawsuit***

Washington, D.C. --

Second District Congressman Brad Carson introduced H.R. 3534 "to provide for the settlement of certain land claims of Cherokee, Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations to the Arkansas Riverbed in Oklahoma." Legislation dealing with the settlement of the land claim was first introduced three decades ago, by then Senator Henry Bellmon (R-OK), and this week Congressman Carson's bill appears to be gathering momentum. Today, the Resources Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives announced that a hearing for Wednesday, April 17th at 10:00 a.m. would be held on the settlement legislation. The hearing will take place in room 1334 in the Longworth House Office Building.

The three tribal governments of the Cherokee, Choctaw and Chickasaw nation filed suit against the state of Oklahoma that would have repaid the value of the land around the Arkansas River, in order for the moral obligation of the United States treaties with the Native American tribes to be satisfied. H.R. 3534 would end the decades long lawsuit and provide an approximately \$50 million settlement to these three tribes.

"Enactment of settlement legislation would clearly bring about tangible benefits," said Congressman Carson. "It would eliminate the need for the Justice Department to bring hundreds of defendants into court, at the same time providing money for economic development in the region. This battle has gone on for far too long and it is time for an agreement to be reached that will in the long run, save the taxpayers millions of dollars."

H.R. 3534 would provide four major benefits resulting from the passage of settlement legislation:

- Eliminate the need for the Department of Justice to bring hundreds of defendants into court due to their occupancy of parts of the 7,700 acres of dry-bed lands.
- Pay the three tribes for the actual present value of the loss of past and future assets they would have had.
- Result in the dismissal of the mismanagement case against the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

- Provide the tribes with resources that would then be used for further economic development in the region.

This legislation has been originally co-sponsored to date by Representative Wes Watkins (R-OK) and in the previous session by former Representative Steve Largent (R-OK).

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